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May 3, 2023

**VIA FIRST CLASS CERTIFIED MAIL**

Chancellor Glenn Boyce  
University of Mississippi  
123 Lyceum  
University, Mississippi 38677

Dr. Alfred Rankins, Sr.  
Commissioner  
Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning  
3825 Ridgewood Road  
Jackson, MS 39211

Mr. Lane Monte Kiffin  
Head Football Coach  
University of Mississippi Department of Athletics  
Oxford, Mississippi 38677

Honorable Lynn Fitch  
Attorney General  
Post Office Box 220  
Jackson, MS 39205

RE: Tort Claims Demand of DeSanto Rollins

Dear Messrs. Boyce, Rankin, Kiffin and Attorney General Fitch:

Please be advised that my firm represents Mr. DeSanto Rollins in his state law and federal law tort claims action against the University of Mississippi, a state governmental agency, and Head Football Coach Lane Monte Kiffin, ("Kiffin") in his individual and official capacities. This tort claims demand letter sets forth a short and plain statement of the facts, the extent of the injuries and damages suffered by Mr. Rollins, the time and place the damage and injury occurred, the names of all persons known to be involved, the amount of money damages sought, and the residence of the person making the claim at the time of the injury and at the time of filing this demand letter.

### STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

Mr. Rollins is currently a senior scholar athlete at the University of Mississippi ("UM") in University, Mississippi. He graduated from Parkview High School ("Parkview") in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2020. Mr. Rollins was a standout football player at Parkview, and he was recruited by at least 20 Division I schools throughout the nation including UM. Mr. Rollins was actively recruited by Head Football Coach Tom Luke with the assistance of Defensive Line Coach Freddie Roach and Defensive Coordinator Coach Mike McIntyre. Coach Luke had a pleasant disposition and successfully wooed Mr. Rollins to attend the UM. Mr. Rollins verbally committed to Coach Luke on June 18, 2019 while he was still a student at Parkview. Thereafter, on August 1, 2019, he received an official offer from the UM for a full-ride football scholarship.

Unfortunately, UM fired Coach Matt Luke on December 1, 2019, and hired Lane Kiffin as the 39<sup>th</sup> Head Football Coach. On December 11, 2019, Coach Kiffin and his staff visited Mr. Rollins at Parkview. Coach Kiffin asked Mr. Rollins to honor his commitment to play football at the UM. Mr. Rollins signed his National Letter of Intent during the Early Signing Period on December 18, 2019. Mr. Rollins, thereafter, reported for summer workouts on June 14, 2020 at the UM.

Mr. Rollins has been a model student-athlete at the UM on and off the field. He was chosen by the UM Office of Social Responsibility and Engagement to represent student athletes at the annual Southeastern Conference ("SEC") Student-Athlete Advisory Council ("SACC") in Birmingham, Alabama, February 10-12, 2023. In addition to this achievement, Mr. Rollins has been nominated two straight years as an Arthur Ashe Sports Scholar Award nominee (2022 and 2023). Mr. Rollins has been on the Chancellor's Honor Roll in the Fall of 2021, Spring of 2022, and the Fall of 2022. Mr. Rollins made the Athletic Director's Honor Roll in the Fall of 2020, the SEC First-Year Academic Honor Roll for school year 2020-2021, the SEC Fall Academic Honor Roll in 2021, and the SEC Fall Academic Honor Roll in 2022. Mr. Rollins received a plaque for being a scholar athlete from the Ole Miss Chapter of the National Football Foundation in the Spring of 2022 for the academic year 2020-2021. Mr. Rollins was featured on the Ole Miss School of Business social media platform for outstanding achievements in October, 2021. He was recognized as the M Club Football Student Athlete of the Month for May, 2021 and the Football Student Athlete of the Week on November 5, 2020.

Mr. Rollins chose to attend the University of Mississippi, not only to live out his dream of someday playing in the NFL, but also to graduate and obtain his bachelor's degree in General Business with a minor in Sports Administration. Mr. Rollins is slated to graduate in December 2023, three years after enrolling at the University of Mississippi.

Mr. Rollins tore his LCL in his left knee during football practice on September 7, 2020. As a result of this injury, Mr. Rollins was unable to practice and play football, and Coach Kiffin made the ultimate decision to red-shirt Mr. Rollins for the 2020 football season. Mr. Rollins had recovered enough from this injury enough to be able to practice during the Spring of 2021. However, Mr. Rollins aggravated the same knee injury during football practice in August, 2022. As a result of the aggravation of his left knee injury, Mr. Rollins was physically unable to practice or play football.



Mr. Rollins couldn't, make sudden cuts, decelerate, make lateral movements, or make any other physical movements required by defensive linemen. Mr. Rollins was unable perform any of the football drills without suffering excruciating pain. Throughout the drills, Mr. Rollins notified his defensive line coaches that he was suffering pain in his left knee. Mr. Rollins notified Coaches Stephan McClure and Randall Joyner about his pain, and they told him to work through the pain. Mr. Rollins told some of his teammates he was suffering pain during practice.

Mr. Rollins told his coaches about the pain the first day he felt the pain, but the coaching staff required him to participate in the practice and run the drills for at least another three days while he was suffering pain and complaining to the coaches about suffering pain.

Eventually, Dr. Luber came to the facility, examined Mr. Rollins, and scheduled an MRI exam Baptist Memorial Hospital - North Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi. An MRI exam was performed on Mr. Rollins' left knee there. Dr. Luber informed Mr. Rollins that the MRI result did not reveal any tears - just scar tissue. Dr. Luber recommended a knee brace and insisted that he practice even with the injury.

Mr. Rollins wore the knee brace until December 11, 2022 when he was given a cortisone shot. Mr. Rollins was forced to practice with his knee injury from August, 2022 until December 11, 2022 when he received the Cortisone shot. Mr. Rollins was forced to go back to practice two days after receiving the Cortisone shot wearing a knee-brace. Mr. Rollins suffered severe cramping the night he received the Cortisone shot. He texted Pat Jernigan, the head trainer, and complained about the cramps. Mr. Jernigan told Mr. Rollins that the cramps were atypical and to check in with the training staff at 8:00 a.m. the next day. Mr. Rollins was required to practice with the team for the remainder of the regular Fall 2022 season which ended in November, 2022 with the post season bowl game ending on December 28, 2022. The last practice was Christmas Day, 2022. UM played in the Tax Act Texas Bowl on December 28, 2022. Mr. Rollins was required to go to the Bowl Game with the team, but he did not suit up because he was still suffering with his left knee injury.

Additionally, Mr. Rollins was suffering a mental injury stemming from an encounter with Defensive Line ("DLine") Coach Joyner. DLine Coach Randell Joyner met with Mr. Rollins after the 2022 regular football season on Monday, November 28, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. Coach Joyner encouraged Rollins to transfer the Fall Semester. Coach Joyner told Mr. Rollins in that meeting that he would definitely look for other places to go. Coach Joyner told Mr. Rollins he knew how UM was wired, and if he stayed at UM he would just be there without playing in a game. Coach Joyner informed Mr. Rollins that if he waited until the Spring, he would not have time to look elsewhere. Coach Joyner told Mr. Rollins that if he stayed at Ole Miss he would "just be here". Mr. Rollins inquired of Coach Joyner why he could make that assessment without even giving him a chance to play. Coach Joyner stated, "you are a guy that does everything right, I think it will be really hard for you to play here". This negative feedback from Coach Joyner led to Mr. Rollins suffering emotional injury.

After the November 28, 2022 meeting with Coach Joyner, Mr. Rollins felt humiliated, embarrassed, undervalued, and unworthy. Mr. Rollins was already suffering physical pain because



of his knee injury and the coaching and medical staff requiring him to practice while injured and in pain when he had this encounter with Coach Joyner. This encounter with Coach Joyner caused Mr. Rollins to suffer anxiety, and sleepless nights. These feelings and symptoms remained with Mr. Rollins throughout the post season and into the Spring Season.

### **Retaliation**

On Monday, February 27, 2023, DLine Coach Joyner called Mr. Rollins on the telephone and informed him that Head Coach Lane Kiffin wanted to meet with him at 6:00 p.m. in his office. There was a mandatory tax meeting concerning student athletes scheduled for February 27, 2023 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This was the same time that Coach Kiffin had scheduled a meeting with Mr. Rollins.

Mr. Rollins went to the meeting with Coach Kiffin. Coach Kiffin started the meeting by saying, "this will be a harsh meeting." Coach Kiffin informed Mr. Rollins that he was about to do what his assistant coaches were afraid to do in prior meetings. He informed Mr. Rollins that he had asked Coach Joyner to get him to transfer, but his (Mr. Rollins') family wanted him to stay. Coach told Mr. Rollins that because of that, he (Kiffin) was going to move him (Rollins) to the Offensive Line to be on the Scout team. Coach Kiffin told Mr. Rollins that UM was low on bodies on the offensive line. Mr. Rollins asked Coach Kiffin, "was it a choice or command", Coach Kiffin shouted, "he was the coach and Mr. Rollins was the player, and if he did not like it, he could quit." Mr. Rollins told Kiffin, that "quitting was not an option".

Coach Kiffin acknowledged that the other coaches were too nice at the exit meeting, then get mad in the end when they do not get what they want." As Coach Kiffin continued to yell and scream, he informed Mr. Rollins how other players find success at other places because they did not meet the criteria at bigger schools. Coach Kiffin continued to scream encouraging Mr. Rollins to transfer or quit. Mr. Rollins sat attentively listening to Coach Kiffin's rants until he ended the meeting. Due to pressure to transfer, a position change, the recent death of his grandmother, and maintaining good grades in his course work to graduate in December, 2023, Mr. Rollins suffered additional emotional distress. After this encounter with Coach Kiffin, Mr. Rollins felt even more humiliated, embarrassed, undervalued, and unworthy. This encounter with Coach Kiffin caused Mr. Rollins to suffer anxiety, panic attacks, a loss of appetite, face breaking out in hives, and sleepless nights. These feelings and symptoms remain with Mr. Rollins until today.

Mr. Rollins decided immediately after the meeting with Coach Kiffin that he need to take a mental break from football and the UM coaching staff. Mr. Rollins immediately contacted Strength and Conditioning Coach Nick Savage and his mother. Mr. Rollins' mother contacted the Athletic Trainer Pat Jernigan and told him that Mr. Rollins was suffering a mental health crisis.

Mr. Jernigan scheduled a meeting for Mr. Rollins with Assistant Athletic Director for Sport Psychology Josie Nicholson. Ph.D., who told him at the initial meeting that he did not "look depressed" even before she did the initial evaluation. Mr. Rollins met with Dr. Nicholson on two other occasions, one of which she encouraged him to talk to the head football coach who was a major cause of his emotional and mental injury. Ms. Nicholson failed to provide an ongoing dialogue with

Mr. Rollins - the student-athlete who was experiencing the mental health crisis. She encouraged him to meet with Coach Kiffin knowing he was one reason causing his anxiety.

At Dr. Nicholson's urging, Mr. Rollins met with Coach Kiffin a second time on March 21, 2023. Coach Kiffin referred to Mr. Rollins as his employee. He called Mr. Rollins a P\*\*\*\*, kicked him off the team for not showing up at practice due to his mental health crisis, shouted "F\*\*\* what your mom says," and "go read your F\*\*\*\*\* rights about mental health".

On Friday, March 24, 2023. Mr. Rollins informed Coach Kiffin that he had retained counsel, and that Coach Kiffin should not contact him anymore, but address all communications through his (Rollins') counsel. Nevertheless, on Monday, March 27, 2023, Coach Kiffin sent an email to Mr. Rollins after being notified that Rollins had retained counsel.

#### **Harassment**

- After informing the coaches that counseling was needed, Mr. Rollins was asked 12 times to meet with Coach Kiffin knowing that Rollins was going through a mental health crisis

Defensive Line Coach Randell Joyner - 4 times

Coach Nick Savage-3 times

Athletic Trainer Pat Jernigan-1 time

Assistant Athletic Director for Sports Psychology Josie Nicholson-1 time

Offensive Line Coach John Garrison-1 time

Football Chief of Staff-Austin Thomas-1 time

Coordinator of Recruiting Strategy-Kelvin Bolden-1 time

- Two position coaches asked to meet with Mr. Rollins after he informed them that he needed time to complete counseling

Defensive Line Coach Randell Joyner - 3 times

Coach Nick Savage-2 times

- The Athletic trainer asked to meet with me knowingly I needed counseling

Pat Jernigan-1 time

The UM has known but ignored, negligently, gross negligently, intentionally, deliberately, maliciously, and with reckless disregard for the health and rights of Mr. Rollins the National Collegiate Athletic Association ("NCAA") rules on mental health for student athletes. Furthermore, UM has not set up mental health policies for student athletes, trained coaching staff and Athletic Department employees about their roles and responsibilities and student athletes rights concerning mental health. And, importantly, the UM has violated Mr. Rollins' rights guaranteed by the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and federal education laws and regulations concerning physical and mental health and disabilities.



**THE EXTENT OF THE CLAIMANT'S DAMAGE AND INJURY**

Mr. Rollins has suffered physical pain, emotional distress, mental injury, and mental anguish as a result of the actions and inactions of the UM and its employees, acting in their official and individual capacities. As a proximate result of the actions and inactions of the UM and its employees, acting in their official and individual capacities, Mr. Rollins has suffered physical injury and aggravation of physical injury to his left knee, emotional distress, mental injury, and mental anguish, and he has incurred medical bills and attorney fees. Mr. Rollins has suffered injuries and damages in the amount of \$500,000.00 from the UM under the Mississippi Tort Claims Act for violation of state law and \$10,000,000.00, plus the loss of future income, from the UM and Coach Lanke Kiffin in his official and individual capacities for violation of federal law.

**THE TIME AND PLACE THE DAMAGE AND INJURY OCCURRED**

The injury and damage occurred from August, 2022 through March 21, 2023 at the University of Mississippi in University, Mississippi.

**THE NAMES OF ALL PERSONS KNOWN TO BE INVOLVED**

The names of all persons known to be involved are as follows:

1. Mr. DeSanto Rollins
2. Ms. Connie Hollins
3. Mr. Pat Jernigan
4. Mr. Anthony Davis, LPC-S
5. Coach Randall Joyner
6. Coach Stefan McClure
7. Dr. Josie Nicholson
8. Coach Lane Kiffin
9. Coach Nick Savage
10. Coach John Garrison
11. Coach Nyse Wander
12. Mr. Austin Thomas
13. Mr. Kevin Bolden

**THE AMOUNT OF MONEY DAMAGES SOUGHT**

Mr. Rollins seeks damages in the amount of \$500,000.00 from the UM under the Mississippi Tort Claims Act for violation of state law and \$10,000,000.00, plus the loss of future income, from the UM and Coach Lanke Kiffin in his official and individual capacities for violation of federal law.

**THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSONS MAKING THE CLAIM**

Mr. DeSanto Rollins  
140 Mary Lane  
Woodville, MS 39669

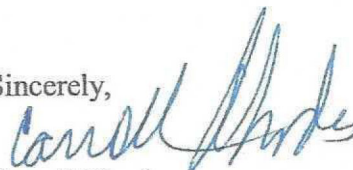
Carroll Rhodes  
Law Offices of Carroll Rhodes  
Post Office Box 588  
Hazlehurst, Mississippi 39083

**DEMAND**

Mr. Rollins demands \$500,000.00 from the UM under the Mississippi Tort Claims Act for violation of state law and \$10,000,000.00, plus the loss of future income, from the UM and Coach Lane Kiffin in his official and individual capacities for violation of federal law.

I await your timely response to this demand.

Sincerely,

  
Carroll Rhodes

CR:lk

cc: Mr. DeSanto Rollins

David Whitcomb  
Office of General Counsel  
University of Mississippi  
209 Lyceum  
Oxford, Mississippi 38677  
(Via Certified Mail)